

January 9, 2013

Attorney General Irvin B. Nathan
District of Columbia Attorney General
441 4th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Attorney General Nathan:

I write in response to your invitation to *Meet the Press* to provide to you information concerning the display of a large capacity firearm magazine during its December 23, 2012 program. As you are aware, the magazine was displayed during David Gregory's interview with Wayne LaPierre, the executive vice president and chief executive officer of the National Rifle Association. The interview included a discussion of the availability of large capacity magazines, which permit multiple bullets to be fired without the need to reload. *Meet the Press* used such a magazine to illustrate for its viewers the issues discussed in the interview.

Meet the Press briefly borrowed the empty magazine from a private citizen who lives outside of the District of Columbia and who *Meet the Press* understood possessed the magazine lawfully. At no time while the magazine was in the offices of *Meet the Press* did it contain any ammunition or was it attached to any firearm. There was no intent to use the empty magazine for any purpose other than to illustrate for viewers of *Meet the Press* an issue that is currently the subject of substantial public debate and news coverage. The magazine was immediately returned to its owner following the broadcast.

Prior to the broadcast, on Friday, December 21, 2012, NBC made inquiries to law enforcement authorities about the permissibility of obtaining and using an unloaded magazine on the broadcast for the above-described editorial purposes. NBC contacted the Office of Public and Governmental Affairs at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives ("ATF") and was advised that the use of an unloaded magazine would be permissible. We understand that the ATF official had consulted with the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department ("MPD") before providing this advice.

Also on December 21, NBC made an inquiry to the Office of Communications of MPD. The MPD advised that DC law prohibits the possession of a high capacity magazine and suggested the program instead use a photograph.


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NBC incorrectly interpreted the information it received from ATF and MPD. It believed that the display of an unloaded magazine not attached to any firearm during a news interview would not be objectionable.

The program did not intend to disrespect the law or law enforcement authorities and regrets any imposition or disruption that resulted. We assure you that, in the future, *Meet the Press* will comply with District of Columbia law and will consult more carefully if any questions arise.

Respectfully submitted,

LEVINE SULLIVAN KOCH & SCHULZ, LLP

By: 

Lee Levine